

March 6, 2001

Re: FCC auctioning off of FM band 216-217Hz

To Whom It May Concern:

It has come to my attention that FM band 216 – 217 will be auctioned off. This is of grave concern to the hearing impaired citizens of the world and those audiologists and other professionals involved in helping these individuals.

This is one of the frequency bands that is allocated for the use of assistive listening devices, including hearing aids with an FM systems, specifically the Phonak Microlink, one of the finest FM systems to have been developed. Many people with hearing loss use this band for the FM system.

There are many severely hearing impaired individuals who depend on their FM assistive listening systems, personal devices and those used in movie theaters, in order to function in daily living activities and to have a quality of life. Whether at work, at school, in theaters, public meetings, or one on one, the FM technology contributes to their independence. There are many children who depend on their FM system in order to function in a classroom and to learn. Taking this away for a short term gain will cost us hundreds of thousands of dollars later on to help these children who were doing well using their current FM system and having minimal help. For some, without their FM systems, they would not be able to communicate effectively nor to become literate. There are still others using a special device, a CROS or BiCROS hearing aid which utilizes FM. These individuals have no usable hearing on one ear. They use a microphone to pick up the sound on the dead ear and transmit it via FM signals to the receiver on the good ear. It is possible that advances will use this particular frequency band.

Additionally, ADA guarantees all individuals with hearing loss the right to participate as if they were hearing individuals. Taking this band away could have future detrimental impact on the compliance status of many businesses and institutions. This could also cause financial hardship if they suddenly needed to change venue to continue to be in compliance with our law, the ADA. Furthermore, the individuals the law was designed to protect would no longer be protected.

PLEASE!!!! Do not take away this important ability to effectively communicate and be contributing citizens from the hearing impaired. This can only cost more in the long run than the short term gain from the auction. **Keep this band for our children and other hearing impaired.** Help keep costs down by allowing for effective communication from the hearing impaired.

Sincerely,

Cindy Ann Simon, Au.D.